

SUPPLEMENTAL AMENDMENT AND RESPONSE TO OFFICE ACTION
U.S. Serial No. 09/705,971
Filed: November 3, 2000

Amendments in the Claims

Claim listing pursuant to 37 C.F.R. § 1.121(c). This listing of claims replaces all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

1. (Currently Amended) A device for processing slaughtered animals or parts thereof, having a first and a second station, comprising:

a. a transfer conveyor which extends between the first station and the second station and which comprises at least one substantially stationary slot with a width, a course, a supply end and a discharge end, which at least one slot comprises a first opening at the supply end of the at least one slot and a second opening at the discharge end of the at least one slot, wherein the at least one slot is designed to carry and support slaughtered animals or parts thereof, the transfer conveyor further comprising at least one driving member which passes through a path which is substantially parallel to the course of the at least one slot and is designed to move the slaughtered animals or parts thereof which are situated in the at least one slot along the at least one slot from the first station towards the second station, wherein the at least one driving member spans at least half the width of the at least one slot;

b. supply means for ~~optionally~~ supplying at the first station slaughtered animals or parts thereof from a first conveyor to the at least one slot of the transfer conveyor, wherein the supply means are adapted to control which slaughtered animals or parts thereof from the group of slaughtered animals or parts on the first conveyor are supplied to the transfer conveyor, and which slaughtered animals or parts thereof from the group of slaughtered animals or parts on the first conveyor are not supplied to the transfer conveyor; and

c. discharge means for discharging the slaughtered animals or parts thereof from the at least one slot of the transfer conveyor at the second station; and

~~d. at least one driving member which passes through a path which is substantially parallel to the course of the at least one slot and is designed to move the selected slaughtered~~

SUPPLEMENTAL AMENDMENT AND RESPONSE TO OFFICE ACTION
U.S. Serial No. 09/705,971
Filed: November 3, 2000

~~animals or parts thereof which are situated in the at least one slot along the at least one slot from the first station towards the second station, wherein the at least one driving member spans at least half the width of the at least one slot.~~

2. (Original) The device of claim 1, wherein the at least one driving member can adopt a first position and a second position, in which the slaughtered animals or parts thereof can and cannot, respectively, be moved from the first station towards the second station.

3. (Original) The device of claim 1, wherein the at least one driving member can rotate about an axis which is substantially perpendicular to the path covered by the at least one driving member.

4. (Original) The device of claim 1, wherein the at least one driving member comprises at least one arm which is designed to transmit the movement of the at least one driving member to the slaughtered animals or parts thereof.

5. (Original) The device of claim 2, comprising force means which exert a force on the at least one driving member, which force opposes the movement of the at least one driving member from the first position towards the second position.

6. (Original) The device of claim 5, wherein the force means comprise spring means.

7. (Original) The device of claim 5, wherein the force means comprise a controllable piston-cylinder device.

8. (Currently Amended) The device of claim 7, wherein the ~~piston/cylinder~~ piston-cylinder device can make the at least one driving member adopt any desired position between the first position and the second position.

SUPPLEMENTAL AMENDMENT AND RESPONSE TO OFFICE ACTION
U.S. Serial No. 09/705,971
Filed: November 3, 2000

9. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 1, wherein the discharge means are designed to selectively discharge the slaughtered animals or parts thereof from the at least one slot.

10. (Original) The device of claim 9, wherein the supply means comprise a switching mechanism which can be moved into a first switched position and a second switched position, in which the slaughtered animals or parts thereof are and are not, respectively, supplied to the at least one slot.

11. (Original) The device of claim 9, wherein the supply means and/or the discharge means are controlled by supply-control means and discharge-control means on the basis of data relating to the slaughtered animals or parts thereof to be transferred.

12. (Original) The device of claim 1, wherein the supply means and/or the discharge means comprise at least one disc which is driven in rotation and is designed to supply or remove the slaughtered animals or parts thereof one by one to or from the at least one slot, and which is provided on its circumference with at least one holding slot which opens out on the outer circumference of the at least one rotatably driven disc and is designed to carry and support at least one slaughtered animal or part of a slaughtered animal.

13. (Original) The device of claim 12, wherein the at least one rotatably driven disc has at least two holding slots.

14. (Original) The device of claim 12, wherein the at least one rotatably driven disc of the discharge means transfers the slaughtered animals or parts thereof into a stationary waiting slot.

SUPPLEMENTAL AMENDMENT AND RESPONSE TO OFFICE ACTION
U.S. Serial No. 09/705,971
Filed: November 3, 2000

15. (Original) The device of claim 1, wherein the at least one slot extends substantially in a horizontal plane.

16. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 1 wherein the at least one slot has a substantially curved course.

17. (Original) The device of claim 1, wherein the at least one slot has a substantially straight course.

18. (Currently Amended) The device of claim 1, wherein an unloading device is provided inside the at least one slot.

19. (Original) The device of claim 18, wherein the unloading device is designed to locally widen the at least one slot.

20. (Currently Amended) The device of claim 19, wherein the unloading device comprises a support member which defines a section of the at least slot and can move substantially transversely with respect to the course of the at least one slot, for locally increasing the width of the at least one slot.

21. (Original) The device of claim 18, wherein unloading-control means are provided for controlling the unloading device.

22. (Currently Amended) The device of claim 21, wherein a weighing device is incorporated in the at least one slot for ~~weighting~~ weighing the slaughtered animals or parts thereof.

SUPPLEMENTAL AMENDMENT AND RESPONSE TO OFFICE ACTION
U.S. Serial No. 09/705,971
Filed: November 3, 2000

23. (Original) The device of claims 22, wherein the unloading-control means record the weight of the slaughtered animals or parts thereof which has been detected by the weighing device and control the unloading device on the basis of this data.

24. (Original) The device of claim 1, wherein a processing device is provided along the course of the at least one slot, for processing the slaughtered animals or parts thereof.

25. (Original) The device of claim 24, wherein the processing device comprises at least one frictional surface which is arranged along the at least one slot and is designed to act on part of the slaughtered animals or parts thereof.

26. (Original) The device of claim 25, wherein the frictional surface forms part of a driven conveyor belt.

27. (Original) The device of claim 26, wherein the processing device comprises two driven conveyor belts which are arranged on either side of the at least one slot, for clamping a part of the slaughtered animals or parts thereof between them.

28. (Original) The device of claim 26, wherein the processing device comprises at least two driven conveyor belts which are arranged one behind the other along the at least one slot.

29. (Original) The device of claim 27, wherein the direction of movement of a first conveyor belt differs from that of a second conveyor belt.

30. (Original) The device of claim 27, wherein the speed of movement of a first conveyor belt differs from that of a second conveyor belt.

31. (Currently Amended) A device for processing slaughtered animals or parts thereof, having a first and a second station, comprising:

SUPPLEMENTAL AMENDMENT AND RESPONSE TO OFFICE ACTION
U.S. Serial No. 09/705,971
Filed: November 3, 2000

a. ~~a conveyor which extends between the first station and the second station and~~
~~which comprises~~ at least one substantially stationary slot which extends between the first station
and the second station and comprises with a width, a course, a supply end, ~~[[and]]~~ a discharge
end, ~~which at least one slot comprises~~ a first opening at the supply end of the at least one slot and
a second opening at the discharge end of the at least one slot, wherein the at least one slot is
designed to carry and support the slaughtered animals or parts thereof;

b. supply means for supplying at the first station the slaughtered animals or parts in
the at least one slot of the conveyor;

c. at least one driving member which passes through a path which is substantially
parallel to the course of the at least one slot and is designed to move the slaughtered animals or
parts thereof which are supplied in the at least one slot along the at least one slot from the first
station towards the second station, wherein the at least one driving member spans at least half the
width of the at least one slot; and

d. discharge means for discharging the slaughtered animals or parts thereof from the
at least one slot ~~in the conveyor~~, wherein the discharge means are controlled by discharge-
control means to discharge the slaughtered animals or parts thereof from the at least one slot at a
controllable rate which is independent from the rate with which the slaughtered animals or parts
thereof are moved along the at least one slot conveyed by the transfer conveyor; and

~~d. at least one driving member which passes through a path which is substantially~~
~~parallel to the course of the at least one slot and is designed to move the slaughtered animals or~~
~~parts thereof which are situated in the at least one slot along the at least one slot from the first~~
~~station towards the second station, wherein the at least one driving member spans at least half the~~
~~width of the at least one slot.~~

SUPPLEMENTAL AMENDMENT AND RESPONSE TO OFFICE ACTION
U.S. Serial No. 09/705,971
Filed: November 3, 2000

32. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 31, wherein the at least one driving member can adopt a first position and a second position, in which the slaughtered animals or parts thereof can and cannot, respectively, be moved from the first station towards the second station.

33. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 31, wherein the at least one driving member can rotate about an axis which is substantially perpendicular to the path covered by the at least one driving member.

34. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 31, wherein the at least one driving member comprises at least one arm which is designed to transmit the movement of the at least one driving member to the slaughtered animals or parts thereof.

35. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 32, comprising force means which exert a force on the at least one driving member, which force opposes the movement of the at least one driving member from the first position towards the second position.

36. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 35, wherein the force means comprise spring means.

37. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 35, wherein the force means comprise a controllable piston-cylinder device.

38. (Currently amended) The device of claim 37, wherein the ~~piston-cylinder~~ piston-cylinder device can make the at least one driving member adopt any desired position between the first position and the second position.

39. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 31, wherein the supply means comprise a switching mechanism which can be moved into a first switched position and a second

SUPPLEMENTAL AMENDMENT AND RESPONSE TO OFFICE ACTION
U.S. Serial No. 09/705,971
Filed: November 3, 2000

switched position, in which the slaughtered animals or parts thereof are and are not, respectively, supplied to the at least one slot.

40. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 31, wherein the supply means and/or the discharge means are controlled by supply-control means and discharge-control means on the basis of data relating to the slaughtered animals or parts thereof to be transferred.

41. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 31, wherein the supply means and/or the discharge means comprise at least one disc which is driven in rotation and is designed to supply or remove the slaughtered animals or parts thereof one by one to or from the at least one slot, and which is provided on its circumference with at least one holding slot which opens out on the outer circumference of the at least one rotatably driven disc and is designed to carry and support at least one slaughtered animal or part of a slaughtered animal.

42. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 41, wherein the at least one rotatably driven disc has at least two holding slots.

43. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 41, wherein the at least one rotatably driven disc of the discharge means transfers the slaughtered animals or parts thereof into a stationary waiting slot.

44. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 31, wherein the at least one slot extends substantially in a horizontal plane.

45. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 31, wherein the at least one slot has a substantially curved course.

SUPPLEMENTAL AMENDMENT AND RESPONSE TO OFFICE ACTION
U.S. Serial No. 09/705,971
Filed: November 3, 2000

46. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 31, wherein the at least one slot has a substantially straight course.

47. (Currently Amended) The device of claim 31, wherein an unloading device is provided inside along the at least one slot.

48. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 47, wherein the unloading device is designed to locally widen the at least one slot.

49. (Currently amended) The device of claim 48, wherein the unloading device comprises a support member which defines a section of the at least one slot and can move substantially transversely with respect to the course of the at least one slot, for locally increasing the width of the at least one slot.

50. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 47, wherein unloading-control means are provided for controlling the unloading device.

51. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 50, wherein a weighing device is incorporated in the at least one slot for weighting the slaughtered animals or parts thereof.

52. (Previously Presented) The device of claims 51, wherein the unloading-control means record the weight of the slaughtered animals or parts thereof which has been detected by the weighing device and control the unloading device on the basis of this data.

53. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 31, wherein a processing device is provided along the course of the at least one slot, for processing the slaughtered animals or parts thereof.

SUPPLEMENTAL AMENDMENT AND RESPONSE TO OFFICE ACTION

U.S. Serial No. 09/705,971

Filed: November 3, 2000

54. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 53, wherein the processing device comprises at least one frictional surface which is arranged along the at least one slot and is designed to act on part of the slaughtered animals or parts thereof.

55. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 54, wherein the frictional surface forms part of a driven conveyor belt.

56. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 55, wherein the processing device comprises two driven conveyor belts which are arranged on either side of the at least one slot, for clamping a part of the slaughtered animals or parts thereof between them.

57. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 55, wherein the processing device comprises at least two driven conveyor belts which are arranged one behind the other along the at least one slot.

58. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 56, wherein the direction of movement of a first conveyor belt differs from that of a second conveyor belt.

59. (Currently Amended) A device for processing a slaughtered animal ~~or part thereof~~, the device having a first and a second station~~[[,]]~~ and further comprising:

a. ~~a conveyor which extends between the first station and the second station and which comprises~~ at least one substantially stationary slot which extends between the first station and the second station and comprises with a width, a course, a supply end, ~~[[and]]~~ a discharge end, ~~which at least one slot comprises~~ a first opening at the supply end of the at least one slot and a second opening at the discharge end of the at least one slot, wherein the at least one slot is designed to carry and support the slaughtered animal ~~or part thereof~~;

SUPPLEMENTAL AMENDMENT AND RESPONSE TO OFFICE ACTION
U.S. Serial No. 09/705,971
Filed: November 3, 2000

b. supply means for supplying at the first station the slaughtered animal ~~or part thereof in~~ to the at least one slot ~~of the conveyor~~;

c. at least one driving member which passes through a path which is substantially parallel to the course of the at least one slot and is designed to move the slaughtered animal which is supplied to the at least one slot along the at least one slot from the first station towards the second station, wherein the at least one driving member spans at least half the width of the at least one slot; and

d. discharge means for discharging the slaughtered animals ~~or parts thereof~~ from the at least one slot ~~in the conveyor~~, wherein the discharge means are located ~~at the second opening of the slot at~~ between the first station and the second station, and wherein the discharge means are controllable, allowing the discharge means to controllably adopt a first position wherein the slaughtered animal ~~or part thereof~~ is conveyed ~~[[in]]~~ along the at least one slot toward the second station ~~opening~~, and allowing the discharge means to controllably adopt a second position wherein the slaughtered animal ~~or part thereof~~ is removed from the at least one slot; and

~~—— d. ——— at least one driving member which passes through a path which is substantially parallel to the course of the at least one slot and is designed to move the slaughtered animal or part thereof which is situated in the at least one slot along the at least one slot from the first station towards the second station, wherein the at least one driving member spans at least half the width of the at least one slot.~~

60. (New) A device for processing a slaughtered animal part, the device having a first and a second station and further comprising:

a. at least one substantially stationary slot which extends between the first station and the second station and comprises a width, a course, a supply end, a discharge end, a first opening at the supply end of the at least one slot and a second opening at the discharge end of the

SUPPLEMENTAL AMENDMENT AND RESPONSE TO OFFICE ACTION
U.S. Serial No. 09/705,971
Filed: November 3, 2000

at least one slot, wherein the at least one slot is designed to carry and support the slaughtered animal part;

b. supply means for supplying at the first station the slaughtered animal part to the at least one slot;

c. at least one driving member which passes through a path which is substantially parallel to the course of the at least one slot and is designed to move the slaughtered animal part which is supplied to the at least one slot along the at least one slot from the first station towards the second station, wherein the at least one driving member spans at least half the width of the at least one slot; and

d. discharge means for discharging the slaughtered animal part from the at least one slot, wherein the discharge means are located between the first station and the second station, and wherein the discharge means are controllable, allowing the discharge means to controllably adopt a first position wherein the slaughtered animal part is conveyed along the at least one slot toward the second station, and allowing the discharge means to controllably adopt a second position wherein the slaughtered animal part is removed from the at least one slot.